



**DIVISION OF DISABILITY AND ELDER SERVICES**

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**State of Wisconsin**

**Department of Health and Family Services**

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**To:** Community Based Residential Facilities  
Adult Family Homes  
Resident Care Apartment Complexes  
Adult Day Care  
Wisconsin Assisted Living Association  
Residential Services Association of Wisconsin  
Wisconsin Association of Homes/Services for the Aging  
Wisconsin Health Care Association  
Board on Aging and Long Term Care  
Disability Rights Wisconsin  
County Departments of Health/Human Service  
Bureau of Long Term Support

**CBRF 06**  
**AFH 04**  
**RCAC 04**  
**ADC 04**

**Via:** Otis Woods, Director  
Bureau of Quality Assurance

**From:** Kevin Coughlin, Chief  
Assisted Living Section  
Bureau of Quality Assurance

**Assisted Living Industry – “State of the State”**

The purpose of this memo is to announce a new Department website entitled “*Assisted Living Industry -State of the State*,” which can be found at:

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/bqaconsumer/AssistedLiving/ALtrends05.pdf>.

This link will be updated semi-annually, and will showcase industry and regulatory trends for assisted living. This is the result of on-going efforts on the part of BQA to provide information and data to consumers, providers, and other stakeholders in order to effect positive changes. At this time, we would also like to recognize and congratulate stakeholders for the positive changes that have occurred in the last several years. This comes as a result of your efforts to strive for excellence, lead change, and assure the involvement of consumers, citizens, providers, advocates, community organizations, and government agencies in all aspects of your work.

As many of you may recall, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee conducted an evaluation of the Department of Health and Family Services’ regulation of assisted living facilities in 2001-2002. The report indicated that assisted living was at a “critical juncture.” Coupled with

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significant growth in assisted living, the Department identified a substantial increase in the number of complaints, non-compliance with regulations resulting in serious enforcement actions, and an inspection and enforcement process that was not well-established.

In order to effect positive change, the Department has promoted increased collaboration among regulators, providers, provider associations, advocates, counties, care management organizations, other state program agencies, and stakeholders. We are all working toward a common goal – improved quality of care and quality of life for consumers in assisted living facilities. As a result of this collaboration, the Department has developed policies to recognize providers with good compliance history, to divert resources to facilities with correction problems, and to provide technical assistance. Barriers between regulators and partnering agencies involved with paying for the care of consumers in assisted living have been reduced. Regulators continue to work closely with providers, provider associations, and advocates to address emerging issues and needs in the assisted living industry. In turn, the provider associations have shared this information with their members, and have provided training and support to promote positive outcomes for consumers.

The end result of these efforts is indicative of a stronger and healthier industry than just a few short years ago. Since 2002:

- Assisted living facilities have grown by 16%;
- Complaints received have decreased by 26%;
- Only 13% of assisted living facilities make up 100% of all the complaints received; and
- More facilities are qualifying for an abbreviated survey (improved compliance).

Despite these improvements, there are still issues that need to be addressed. Assisted living continues to evolve and change, especially due to the Department's initiatives to place more consumers in community settings. It is important for all stakeholders to continue working together to improve the industry. Thank you for all of your efforts. The Bureau of Quality Assurance looks forward to working with you as we all continue to do our very important work!

KC/CA